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CHILE: JUNTA PRESIDENCY STRENGTHENED

A governmental reorganization decree issued last week stopped short of formally designating junta president Pinochet as president- of the republic, but it vested broad executive powers in the junta presidency and named the incumbent "supreme chief of the nation."

Pinochet's elevation appears to have been designed primarily to streamline a cumbersome decision-making system. Issuance of the detailed "statute of the governing junta" not only reflects the determination of the armed forces to retain power until their goals are achieved, but also shows their concern with establishing a moral and legal basis for military rule.

Under the statute, the four junta members, including Pinochet, remain in command of their respective military or police services. The statute sets out elaborate formulas for the temporary and permanent filling of vacancies on the junta and for the assignment of seniority to new members. A key provision stipulates that permanent replacement-ho are to be named by the remaining junta members-become last in line of succession to the presidency.

The reorganization formalizes Pinochet's gradual rise to de facto primacy among the junta

members, but does not suddenly bring one-man rule to Chile. The decree carefully hedges Pinochet's new prerogatives. Legislative power, for example, remains the "exclusive domain" of the junta, as does the right to act on the budget, taxes, wages, and other specified matters. The junta president is to exercise various powers with the "cooperation," "accord," or "advice" of the junta, and the junta's decisions must be unanimous.

How much real power eventually will accrue to the junta presidency probably will depend in large part on the personalities of current and future junta members. Pinochet seems to be acutely sensitive to the importance of maintaining armed forces unity, and he will feel out the new levers of power cautiously. Sudden shifts in the military government's policies or style are thus unlikely. [REDACTED]



Pinochet

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